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Community Corner

Team Rubicon Helps Mom Rebuild Home Nearly Lost To Harvey

Angielc Garcia is used to working hard and helping others, but she never thought she'd find herself needing a helping hand, until Harvey.

By Bryan Kirk, Patch Staff
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Angielc Garcia cuts the ribbon as Team Rubicon members welcome her back home. (Team Rubicon)

HOUSTON — A Houston area woman who nearly lost her home to Hurricane Harvey, was welcomed home by members of Team Rubicon on June 20, nearly to years after the home she's lived in all her life was nearly destroyed.

Angiele Garcia is used to working hard and helping others, but she never thought she'd find herself needing a helping hand, but then Hurricane Harvey happened.

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"I have lived in that house a majority of my life," said Garcia, who has lived there since 1968.

In the days after Harvey hit the gulf coast, Garcia, who drives a tow truck, was rolling through deep water with her son and helping anyone who needed rescue.

Garcia was out in the deep water not just because she felt needed, but because she also felt helpless when those same flood waters overtook her childhood home, filling it with three feet of murky water.



Angiele Garcia (right) embraces Team Rubicon's Ginger Lawrence, who was the site supervisor on Garcia's home rebuild (Team Rubicon)

When the water was finally gone, she sought help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and was denied.

"I started rehabbing the house with my father-in-law," she said. "The house was really bad. The more we took down, the more things we found wrong."

They ripped moldy and soggy sheet rock from the walls and tossed soggy insulation out with carpet and furniture, all while she was still living in the home that had become uninhabitable.

Eventually, the mold forced her and her son to leave, she said.

To make matters worse, while she was out trying to make a living and make enough money to fix her home, someone came in and stole the copper wiring from the home, she told Patch.

Garcia eventually heard about Team Rubicon and all the work they were doing with families who could not get help from the government, or the city of Houston and she asked for their help.

Team Rubicon, a volunteer veteran's organization, played a prominent role in the Houston area aiding with rescue operations in Houston during Hurricane Harvey. The team is still in Houston, but the role is different these days.

"After three months of Hurricane Harvey operations, we saw so many families in need of additional services that we did something that had been on our strategic plan for four years. We launched a home rebuild pilot to put more families back in safe, stable homes," said

David Burke, Vice President of Programs and Field Operations at Team Rubicon. "Through the hard work of our team and great support from our partners, we've seen huge progress rebuilding homes with teams of volunteers. And, the Houston Rebuild pilot has become the centerpiece of our entire rebuild program, which has helped provide long-term recovery services for communities in Florida and Puerto Rico. Looking ahead, Team Rubicon is working to 'scale down' rebuild to support families and communities affected by storms that never reach the national news cycle, weather incidents that are more regularly being referred to as low attention disasters."

Team Rubicon hit the half-way mark of its 100 home rebuild goal in Houston when it took on Garcia's home in May.

Team members came into the gutted home replaced her roof, added new counter tops, sheetrock and insulation, replaced her floors, and upgraded her home for central heat and air, something the old home didn't have before the storm.

"I love this house so much. They did such an awesome job," she said. "They finished what I couldn't finished and I don't know what I would have done without them."

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